

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes (final)

February 10, 2015

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 7:30 pm at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Present were Committee members Gordon Brockway, Sue Felshin, Jane Hotchkiss (co-chair), Mark Myles and Alan Whitney (clerk); committee members Jill Appel (co-chair), Gilda Gussin and Bill Lehr were absent. Also present were Pamela Cady (Town Energy Manager) and Concord resident Eric Reinhard.

Meeting minutes

The draft minutes of the January 20, 2015 meeting were discussed and amended. *Ms. Felshin moved that these minutes be accepted as amended; Ms. Hotchkiss seconded; passed unanimously.*

It was pointed out that Ms. Cady is the new point person for posting CSEC meeting agendas and minutes to the Town website. Boilerplate agenda will be created to be posted in absence of custom agenda.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

The next CSEC meetings are scheduled for March 10, 2015 and April 7, 2015.

Letter from CSEC Regarding Sustainability at Junction Village

Ms. Felshin submitted to the Board of Selectman the letter she wrote regarding recommended goals and metrics for sustainability for the Junction Village development; she will also send an e-mail to the Town Manager indicating that CSEC would like to be involved as early as possible in Junction Village planning process and offer to meet with him to discuss sustainability issues. Further, the message will be carried to the TM that CSEC believes it would be beneficial for CSEC to be involved early in any planning/review process for any project that needs to address sustainability issues.

Sustainability Webinar

Ms. Cady stated that she will not be able to attend a February 18 APA webinar on sustainability being sponsored by the Concord Planning Division. Ms. Felshin indicated she might be able to attend.

Green Your Heat Program (GYH)

Ms. Hotchkiss met with Emerson Hospital vice-presidents Erik Storey and Bonnie Goldsmith to discuss Emerson Hospital participation in the GYH program and urge them to work with CSEC to pursue sustainability goals. Ms. Hotchkiss indicated that the idea of appointing an Emerson GYH Team Leader quickly 'hit a brick wall'. Similarly, Mr. Brockway had a conversation with a Council on Aging (COA) leader; there was interest in sustainability goals, but this person was not able to become a Team Leader, and even asked if funds were available for COA out-of-pocket expenses in promoting GYH program; however, COA is interested in seeking a competitive grant to supply matching funds, which could be a fruitful way of both greening heat and assisting the most vulnerable population. To help promote GYH at COA/HWCC, Ms. Cady is working on a GYH promotion paragraph for the HWCC newsletter.

Based on the above examples and others, it has become clear that the GYH affinity-group 'Team Leader' approach is not working well as hoped and needs to be revised. Ms. Hotchkiss reiterated that the current GYH goal is a successful pilot program and that we will do what is necessary to do so. Ms. Hotchkiss indicated that she is preparing to approach the middle schools and will also follow up with Emerson Hospital.

Sagewell's website is still having some problems and not yet ready for prime time; 30 people have signed up for weatherization audits, but no audits have yet been scheduled due to issues not yet resolved at Sagewell; Sagewell is currently accepting no additional audit requests. Ms. Hotchkiss will contact Sagewell to understand details of problems and ask that a Sagewell representative attend all CSEC meetings.

Following some discussion regarding readiness, snow, and the timing of school vacation week, *Ms. Felshin moved to cancel the planned Feb 17 GYH event and empower the GYH sub-committee to choose a later date and a location for a GYH Open House; seconded by Mr. Myles and passed unanimously.* Mr. Brockway will notify absent CSEC members so they can pass cancellation messages to anyone they know who might be planning to attend.

Mr. Brockway suggested that Facebook/Twitter accounts for GYH might be useful; suggestion will be passed along to Sagewell. Ms. Hotchkiss stated that any creation of GYH flyers will be responsibility of GYH sub-committee.

Ms. Cady indicated that she understands that part of Sagewell's problem may be resistance of insulation contractors to installing programmable thermostats (PTs), which is outside of their normal work envelope. *Mr. Myles moved that a sub-committee be appointed to review information from Sagewell and make a recommendation on course of action on PTs, as well as determine a date for a GYH Open House. Motion seconded by Ms. Felshin and passed unanimously.* GYH sub-committee members are Ms. Appel, Mr. Brockway, Ms. Felshin and Ms. Hotchkiss.

Ms. Cady will edit GYH verbiage as necessary to conform to updated schedule as well as any changes to programmable-thermostat part of GYH program. She is also thinking about creating a GYH button to act as a conversation starter. CMLP has already created its own version of a GYH flyer. Ms. Felshin suggested that flyers should be made available at Keyes Rd offices, Town House, libraries, and possibly other places.

A question was asked about whether it would be ethical for a CSEC member to get an audit/rebate through the GYH program; Ms. Hotchkiss suggested contacting the MA Ethics Commission for an answer; Mr. Myles volunteered to contact the Ethics Commission on this matter. He will also check whether Town employees can apply for rebates. A question was asked regarding the possibility CMLP acquiring a thermal camera for loan, similar to its thermal leak detectors and smoke sticks. Ms. Felshin will follow up with Ms. Aceti.

CCHS Program Update

Ms. Cady indicated that she plans on March 5 to introduce GYH to CCHS 9th-grade students in Peter Nichol's earth-science class. She will present the GYH concepts and urge students to discuss GYH with their parents and direct them to visit the GYH website.

Green Communities

Ms. Cady indicated she will be working on a Green Communities final report later this week. \$22K was available to GYH through the GC program, but GYH was not ready, so money was moved to municipal streetlights; Concord Academy also made a donation to streetlight project.

Ms. Felshin opined that the new streetlights installed under the GC grant are too bright and too blue; she will talk with Chris Roy at CMLP about this issue.

CMLP Rate Meetings

Ms. Hotchkiss has been attending Light Plant rate meetings (though several have been cancelled on account of snow). The CARES fund still has some funding. It is important that any new rate design send the right signals to people regarding conservation and sustainability; no proposals yet. Mr. Myles indicated that he is interested in rate design; Ms. Hotchkiss suggested that he contact Gary Clayton at CMLP for more information. Mr. Brockway said that he understood that significant CMLP rate increases may be a consequence of recent major capital upgrades.

Town School Buses

Ms. Hotchkiss has been researching the possibilities and practicalities of greener Concord school buses and has talked with various state and town officials and groups about this issue; Concord is in the market for 18 new school buses. Biggest issues are technological readiness and cost. MA has some incentives. Concord should be working with the state to develop a pilot program to push for more energy-efficient/green buses. All-electric buses are not yet ready for prime time (also too expensive) but perhaps a pilot bus. Natural gas

and hybrid buses are possibilities, though limitations at the Knox Trail bus depot do not allow on-site LNG (too near public water supply); propane might be a bridge fuel; hybrid buses are not yet ready for prime time. A suggestion has been made that, instead of keeping large diesel storage tanks at Knox Trail depot, buses purchase diesel via credit card; when time comes to ditch diesel, there would be no tanks to get rid of (also eliminates possibility of diesel spill).

Mr. Brockway wondered at the contradiction of Acton allowing diesel, but not LNG, at the Knox Trail depot.

Mr. Whitney asked how other communities are addressing this issue. Ms. Hotchkiss will circulate to CSEC members some material regarding this issue.

In future, the Concord part of the Knox Trail site will likely be developed for solar PV, which could be used for Town vehicles helping with Green Communities goals. Ms. Hotchkiss suggested that the Town might sell SRECs to the school district (or some such) in order to help finance electric-based buses.

Carlisle Heat Pump Challenge

Ms. Cady said that Carlisle has asked CSEC/Concord to join their ‘heat pump challenge’. Ms. Cady will seek more details.

Ms. Felshin asked if it might be appropriate for Carlisle to present their HP project at the GYH Open House. Mr. Brockway responded that he felt it was too much to try to do at the GYH Open House, was not strongly synergistically with our GYH project, and could complicate the GYH project. As an alternative, Carlisle could send a rep. to set up an information table but not make a presentation.

Tufts Heat Pump Project

Mr. Brockway reported that he, Mr. Whitney and Brad Hubbard-Nelson met with Tufts students last week to present and discuss the Heat Pump Project; about 25 engineering students (mostly seniors) attended. There was a lively discussion with a number of questions from the students. The students are organizing themselves into teams; we expect to hear from them again soon.

Ms. Cady asked if it might be reasonable to include not just heat pumps, but the synergy with insulation as well. The consensus was that including insulation was probably not advisable at this stage as it adds complexity and could muddy the message.

Ms. Hotchkiss suggested that the GYH Open House would be an opportunity to collect names of Concord residents who might be interested in heat pumps.

CSEC membership and leadership

Several current CSEC members will leave CSEC this spring (at least Ms. Hotchkiss), and new members and leadership will be needed. Also, CSEC Board-of-Selectmen liaison Elise Woodward will be leaving. CSEC needs to think about leadership model going forward – co-chair model may be appropriate. CSEC needs diversity but also members that are engaged and conversant in energy matters. GYH program could be used as an attractor for new CSEC members.

Visitor Comments

Visitor Eric Reinhard asked if any CSEC members were planning to attend the NESEA “BuildingEnergy 15” conference being held Mar 3-5 in Boston; not clear whether any CSEC members will be able to attend. He suggested that including heat pumps at the GYH open house would not be excessive and would rather be synergistic.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan Whitney, clerk